WEB ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Web accessibility, or e-accessibility, is the provision of electronic resources and tools designed to meet the accessibility needs of users with impairments relating to sight, hearing, motor function, seizures, or learning disabilities.

In compliance with Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Greenville Technical College (GTC) develops policies and supports activities to preserve and improve accessibility for all users of electronic content, including any resource or tool that is needed to teach, learn, work, or conduct business at the college. While web accessibility is a legal requirement, the college also views e-accessibility as an inclusive approach that benefits all users.

GTC employees should be aware that websites, portals, courses, and other electronic content should comply with Section 508 standards at a minimum. Additionally, third parties, such as software providers and textbook publishers, are expected to report their compliance efforts at the time of purchase.

Blackboard Ally is active in each Blackboard shell. The purpose of this tool is to improve students' experiences within Blackboard by scanning for accessibility. It enables students to convert files in a course to more accessible formats such as HTML, electronic braille, audio, and more. For more information, refer to Blackboard Ally for Students (https://www.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/serve/XVETeqkBpJlWdZ/html/), also located in Student Resources in the course menu. For faculty, it will scan content directly in Blackboard for accessibility issues but not content accessed through a hyperlink or third party. Next to each document within a course, a meter will be visible, indicating the level of accessibility. The expectation is that all meters appear green, which indicates higher levels of accessibility. Faculty are also provided with suggested changes to create a more accessible document. For additional information, refer to Blackboard Ally for Faculty (https://www.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/serve/7JgcTZeo46zB3h/html/).

The Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) schedules regular training to help employees learn about accessibility guidelines and create accessible content. Additionally, in emergencies, Student Disabilities Resources Center (SDRC) or Curriculum & Instructional Support Center (CISC) may be able to assist employees who need help developing accessible content. The SDRC staff also teaches students and employees to use assistive technology that allows them to use accessible content. SDRC responds to any complaints from users who are unable to access GTC's online resources.

Finally, a college-wide Web Accessibility Team has increased accessibility awareness and compliance by conducting audits of electronic resources, ensuring continuous improvement through upgraded content, reviews of policies and procedures, training, and resources.